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Hieratic signs in a cursive hieroglyphic text: the case of the burial chamber of the tomb of Djehuty (TT 11) with additions of other contemporary examples

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Abstract

Hieratic signs are often scattered throughout funerary texts that were written in cursive hieroglyphs during the New Kingdom. While some reasons for their presence have been adduced in the past, this paper suggests that an in-depth analysis of the type, function, frequency, and location of hieratograms in a text casted in a more formal script can offer meaningful insights into wider aspects of scribal culture and practices. Departing from a case study of the burial chamber in the tomb of Djehuty (TT 11) and other contemporary examples, the author argues that the presence of hieratograms can be explained by a dynamic combination of material factors, cultural causes, individual choices, and, probably, by unconscious and mechanical reasons.

State of the art

The analysis of all aspects related to the hieratic signs (or hieratograms) that appear in a funerary text written in cursive hieroglyphs can shed new light into wider aspects of scribal culture and practices. However, no systematic analysis of such signs in the prevailing private funerary composition of the 18th through the 20th dynasties – the Book of Going Forth by Day/Book of the Dead in the so-called Theban recension – has been hitherto undertaken. During this early and ‘experimental’ phase of the corpus, which affected the content, format, sequence, and media of the texts, cursive hieroglyphs came to dominate Book of the Dead (henceforth BD) productions, replacing the hieratic script that had prevailed in the earliest examples of the late Second Intermediate Period and early New Kingdom written on coffins

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and shrouds.² However, hieratic signs still turn up in many cursive hieroglyphic BD copies produced during the New Kingdom, and in all types of textual conveyors. Most editions of such artefacts – that tend to focus on shrouds and papyri – omit information on the typology or location of hieratograms,³ or the data that they collect is incomplete.⁴ In some cases, the interest in those signs arises only from the fact that they can provide chronological clues to date a manuscript.⁵ An important step forward for script analysis in the late 1980s was the doctoral dissertation of Munro, which offered a compendium of hieratic signs found in several New Kingdom papyri and shrouds written in cursive hieroglyphs.⁶ However, since both the work of Munro and current BD editions lack additional numerical or statistical information and co-textual data on hieratograms, it is difficult to evaluate the frequency or distribution of these signs in the manuscripts, let alone their context of use.

The prevailing script in the sources dealt with in this article (see section 2) was a system called cursive hieroglyphs, and sometimes dubbed linear hieroglyphs.⁷ Cursive hieroglyphs maintained the figurative materiality and iconic power of hieroglyphs, but the signs were traced more schematically and often dispensed with inner details.⁸ Since the Middle Kingdom, the system was considered a specific mark of religious texts (comprising funerary, ritual, and magical-medical content), and is often indexical of temple libraries. It was normally associated with a columnar format,

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- 2 Dorman 2019, 27–33, 35–37. According to this scholar, what he dubs the ‘scribal’ compositional format (written in hieratic) was superseded by the ‘monumental’ one (opting for formal hieroglyphs in large vignettes and cursive hieroglyphs for the texts) during or shortly after the co-regency of Hatshepsut and Thutmose III.
 - 3 Such was the outlook of BD publications until the 1990s, but since then, editions of sources in the prevailing series for BD studies (Catalogue of the Books of the Dead in the British Museum; Handschriften des Altägyptischen Totenbuches; Beiträge zum Alten Ägypten) include a section dealing with the type of script or, specifically, with hieratic signs.
 - 4 The publications of the previous note usually include a section devoted to the hieratic signs that appear on a given manuscript. The location of some examples of each sign is pinpointed, without being exhaustive (with the exception of Munro and Fuchs 2015, 15–16).
 - 5 McDonald 1981, 60. See also Munro 1988, 193. For the potential for dating offered by the intrusion of hieratic elements in the so-called Book of the Earth, see Roberson 2019, 170.
 - 6 Munro 1988, 192–193, 254–257, Liste 19.
 - 7 Verhoeven 2015, 25 (following Richard Parkinson and Penelope Wilson). See also Gasse 2016, 61–62 recalling Champollion’s designation of this script as *hiéroglyphes linéaires*. The script has also been called ‘semi-cursive’/*Semi-kursive*, ‘book-writing’/*Buchhieroglyphen* or *Buchschrift* (Fischer 1976, 40; Ali 2002, 29), and *Totenbuch-Kursive* (Lucarelli 2020).
 - 8 Descriptions and discussions of cursive hieroglyphs can be found in Fischer 1976, 40–44; Munro 1988, 193–197; Parkinson and Quirke 1995, 24–26; Ali 2001; Goelet 2003, 10–13; Harling 2006, 8; Allam 2007; Goelet 2010, 127–128; Graefe 2015; Lüscher 2015, 99–102; Verhoeven 2015, 38–39 (various tables in this article gather the opinions of several scholars on the sources from which this script derived, whether hieratic or monumental hieroglyphs); Gasse 2016, 62–65; Vernus 2017, 480; Lucarelli 2020.

with the signs facing rightwards or leftwards, and was also often coupled with a retrograde orientation when the texts were copied in either columns or lines. Another characteristic of this form of writing is its certain degree of statism, in the sense that there was some reluctance to introduce diachronic changes,⁹ which is instead a hallmark of the hieratic script. Moreover, the absence of ligatures and abbreviations brings cursive hieroglyphs closer to the more formal and monumental hieroglyphs than to the more tachygraphic hieratic. As will be pointed out below, cursive hieroglyphs covered a wide spectrum of forms, ranging from the more detailed to the more schematic, and there are considerable variations in individual handwriting. In methodological terms, this poses a problem for a modern analytical search for closed categories, and it should instead be recognised that the boundaries between the abbreviated form of a cursive hieroglyph and a hieratic sign are often fuzzy.¹⁰ All these considerations make urgent the need to compile detailed palaeographies so that we can access the wider picture.¹¹

Sources

This paper addresses a specific medium on which funerary texts were copied in cursive hieroglyphs using rush-pens:¹² the walls and ceilings of burial chambers belonging to members of the Theban elite and subelite that were built during the early 18th dynasty, and were decorated with spells drawn from old and recent funerary corpora. The chamber of the ‘overseer of the royal treasury, overseer of works for royal monuments, and overseer of the cattle of Amun’ Djehuty (TT 11) will be used here as the main case study.¹³ Djehuty was a high-ranking official, who probably originated from the area of Hermopolis and, at a later stage in his career, was pro-

9 Munro 1988, 194; Haring 2006, 8, n. 6; Lucarelli 2020, 581, 582, 587–588.

10 See also Dorman 2019, 39, n. 101.

11 Haring 2006, 9. This is one of the aims of the project set forth by Ursula Verhoeven, *Altägyptische Kursivschriften. Digitale Paläographie und Systematische Analyse des Hieratischen und der Kursivhieroglyphen* (<https://aku.uni-mainz.de/> [1 August 2020]). An earlier attempt at gathering a palaeography of cursive hieroglyphs was announced by Ali (2001), but seems not to have been continued.

12 Carved signs imply a different technology and different actors, so that the work of scribes is obscured by that of those who chiselled the texts. The burial chamber of Senenmut (TT 353) will therefore not be taken into account in this study.

13 Galán 2014; Díaz-Iglesias Llanos 2017, 2019, 2020. The tomb of Djehuty is one of the targets of the Spanish Mission working in Dra Abu el-Naga under the direction of José M. Galán, for which see <https://proyectodjehuty.com/> [1 August 2021].

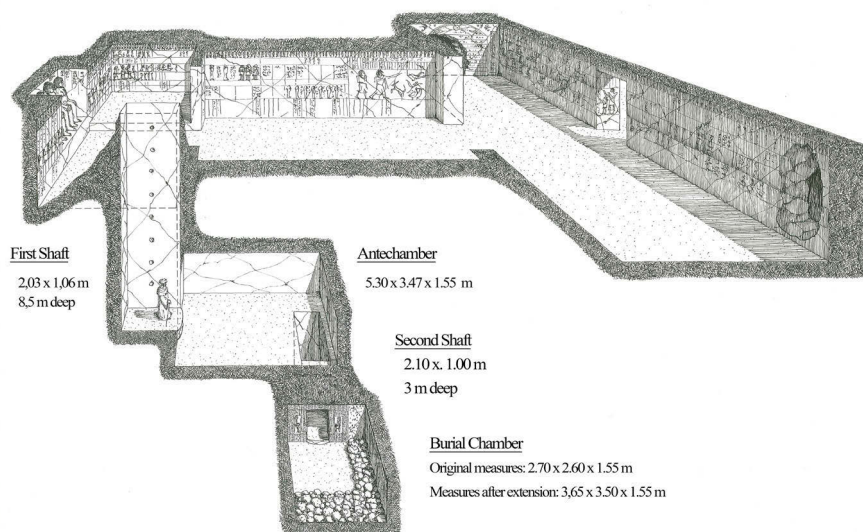


Fig. 1: Plan of the tomb-chapel of Djehuty (TT II), with a reconstruction of the two stages documented in the decoration of the burial chamber (© Djehuty Project. Drawing: C. Cabrera)

moted to these positions in the Theban court under the joint reign of Hatshepsut and Thutmose III.¹⁴

Access to his burial chamber is gained from the innermost part of his tomb-chapel, via two shafts and an antechamber. Originally, all four walls and the ceiling of the chamber were covered with BD spells and vignettes. However, at an unknown point, but probably while the tomb owner was still alive, two of the inscribed walls were demolished to enlarge the room. The planned extension of the decoration was never completed since one wall was left roughly carved, while the other was covered with plaster to level out the surface (fig. 1). The ceiling also began to collapse at an uncertain date, probably as a result of mechanical cracks that originated in the process of, or as a result of, widening the space. The epigraphic task of recording and studying the texts of the burial chamber was begun by the author in 2013, with one aim being to reconstruct the original decoration by re-joining the fallen fragments.

Despite the loss of texts from the two undecorated (or still-to-be-decorated) walls and the partial decay and fall of the rest of the surfaces, the burial chamber of TT II still preserves 42 BD spells. This is the largest collection of formulae for any such mortuary space from the early and mid-part of the 18th dynasty yet discovered, and its complex decorative programme also stands out for the distribution

¹⁴ For his career, see most recently, Galán and Díaz-Iglesias Llanos 2020.

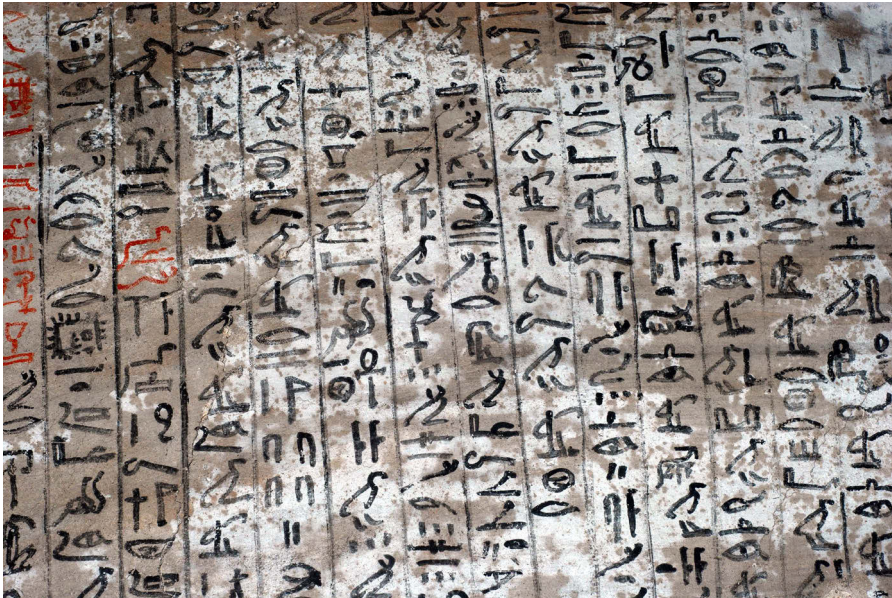


Fig. 2: A section of the decoration in the burial chamber of TT 11, corresponding to the ceiling (© Djehuty Project)

of its spells. The succession of formulae mimics past models (the sequence found on shrouds belonging to members of the royal family and court during the late 17th and early 18th dynasties), while also bringing in variation and innovation through the introduction of more uncommon spells.¹⁵ The texts were written in cursive hieroglyphs with some intrusion of hieratic signs, and were arranged in columns that followed a retrograde orientation (fig. 2). In two cases – associated with compositions foreign to the BD tradition that surround the large-scale figure of Nut in the centre of the ceiling¹⁶ and the image of Djehuty’s parents on the north wall – the signs show a higher degree of monumentality. This level of formality was attained by bringing the shape of the characters closer to full hieroglyphs than to cursive ones, and by filling some graphemes with black paint. The presence of hieratic signs even in these more carefully executed sections should be highlighted for the purpose of this article (fig. 3).

In the study presented here the contemporary structures of the ‘grain accountant of Amun, scribe and steward of the vizier Weseramun’ Amenemhat (TT 82)¹⁷ and that

¹⁵ Díaz-Iglesias Llanos 2019, 150–153.

¹⁶ Galán 2013.

¹⁷ Davies and Gardiner 1915, 102–109, pls. 26–45.



Fig. 3: Image of the goddess Nut, presiding the ceiling of the burial chamber of TT 11 and surrounded by formulae that go back to the Coffin Texts tradition (© Djehuty Project)

of the ‘royal scribe and overseer of the double granaries of Upper and Lower Egypt’ Nakhtmin (TT 87)¹⁸ will serve to contextualise the burial chamber of Djehuty. The decoration of all three involved scribes who had an excellent command of cursive hieroglyphs and knowledge of the conventions governing the production of funerary manuscripts: scripts and graphical devices, including formatting tools, changes in ink colours, and the arrangements of texts and vignettes.¹⁹ Additionally, the example of Nakhtmin is quite exceptional, since it is one of the few cases in the field of textual transmission in ancient Egypt where the intermediate model and the final product have been preserved. The publication by Lüscher of most of the ostraca

18 Guksch 1995, 74–75, pls. 14–18.

19 These aspects are discussed for TT 11 in Díaz-Iglesias Llanos forthcoming.

used by the scribes to remediate²⁰ the texts onto the walls of Nakhtmin's final resting place²¹ offers a unique opportunity to track the copyists at work.

The joint analysis of these three burial chambers, together with that of the 'vizier' Weseramun (TT 61),²² is part of a wider project that I started in 2019. Its aim is to apply ideas derived from the 'New' or 'Material Philology' to an underrated source in the study of ancient Egyptian texts, in order to understand scribal training and practices, and the human and material factors that affected the transmission of funerary compositions during the New Kingdom.²³

The walls of the underground burial chambers in TT 11, 82, and 87, and – exceptionally – also the ceiling in the case of Djehuty, contain monumental or three-dimensional materialisations of texts and images, many of which were more frequently committed to mobile carriers such shrouds and leather or papyrus rolls.²⁴ In contrast with these two-dimensional and portable artefacts, three-dimensional spaces would have entailed a high expenditure and different physical constraints when it came to their decoration. However, our knowledge of the material process that underlies the decoration in such spaces is still limited with regard to body postures (were the scribes standing, squatting, or sitting while inking the walls and ceiling?) and forms of interaction with the written surfaces (what types of modifications could be introduced in the copied texts? Did the scribe understand the text that he remediated?). The mechanics of the scribal copying deployed in these chambers are still barely understood for large scale, vertical and horizontal surfaces that stand at the interface between the practices of ancient scribes and painters.

The architectural surfaces in TT 11, 61, 82, and 87 were filled with funerary spells and captions to vignettes written in cursive hieroglyphs, while monumental hieroglyphs (or signs close to these forms) were reserved for horizontal bands and some specific formulae that accompanied large scale figures. It is important to remember that although the cursive hieroglyphic script is regarded as *sehr normiert*, the spectrum of forms, formality, iconicity, and embellishment of the signs included in this system was quite broad.²⁵ The variety of cursive forms of the sign Gardiner D2 (𓄳) attested in a single document (fig. 4) indicates that while some scribes resorted to forms closer to hieroglyphs, others either tended towards hieratic, directly included

20 Hussein 2017 refers with this word to the act of transference of materials from one medium of transcription to another, a process in which changes to the length, content, and written form of the text were introduced by the scribe.

21 Lüscher 2013, 2015.

22 Dziobek 1994, 42–47, pls. 9–16, 28–35, 49.

23 Díaz-Iglesias Llanos 2020.

24 To contextualise the data, it should be remarked that for the 17th and 18th dynasties, the *Totenbuchprojekt* Database lists 42 shrouds and 192 papyri, and only 34 private tombs decorated with BD spells, cf. <http://totenbuch.awk.nrw.de/> [13 April 2020].

25 Graefe 2015, 122–123.

Gardiner	Visual Glyph	TT 11					Möller	
D2		WI 77	WI II 31	CV x+7	WI 13	CI 35	CI 49	Nr. 80

Gard.No.	MR Ram.Pap.			18 Dyn.			19 Dyn.		21 Dyn.	
Möller No.	V	VI	VII	Th/Am	Iuya	Nbsny	Hu.	Ani	M.k.R.	
D.2 80										
		21	A.3	T-II	19.19	17.34	8	17.41	17.50	99.26-18
	12			T.XXIV	17.23	17.48				
		34	A.14				21	17.68	17.112	100.9, 123.1
				T.XV	29	137.6				
	41	43	B.6		ch. 31		3	5	144.3-7	
	74	43	44			137.13		6	7	144.11
			I		3	4				
			A.XLI		153			pl. 19		
		72				137.20				
			S		2				7	148

Fig. 4: Variants of the sign Gardiner D2 in cursive hieroglyphs, which illustrate both the variety of forms within a single scribal hand and differences between copyists in a given manuscript/composition. Above: examples drawn from the burial chamber of TT 11 (W stands for west wall; C for ceiling; Roman numerals indicate registers; Arabic numerals indicate the column number) © Djehuty Project. Below: examples drawn from Ali 2001, 16)

hieratograms (Möller no. 80), or opted for hybrid graphemes²⁶ in the texts that they copied. The mental and physical process of writing in manuscript cultures was so swift, flexible, and fleeting²⁷ that several options can be found within a single scribal hand. As mentioned in the first section, the methodological problem behind the fuzzy boundaries existing between the abbreviated form of a cursive hieroglyph and a hieratic sign should be born in mind when undertaking any analysis of the different scribes who worked on the same object.

26 Lüscher 2015, 100 refers to these hybrid signs as “Zwischenformen, die also ansonsten weder im Hieratischen noch im Hieroglyphischen vorkommen.” The case of hybrid ductus and forms of signs, which form a special category of signs that cannot be taken simply for hieratic or for cursive hieroglyphs, has been dealt with by Ali 2002, 14, 27; 2020.

27 Parkinson 2009, 90.



Hieratic signs in a cursive hieroglyphic text: queries to pursue

Past models: Why?

In previous publications, several authors sought to explain why hieratic signs appeared in funerary compositions written in cursive hieroglyphs. To my knowledge, at least six reasons have been adduced for their intrusion:

- Firstly, lack of space.²⁸ This circumstance is especially conspicuous in the case of hieratograms written at the end of columns, where these signs were easier to squeeze in than their cursive hieroglyphic counterparts.²⁹ This can also apply in instances of corrections, when overlooked signs had to be inserted in the margins and use was made of the more space-saving hieratic signs.³⁰
- Secondly, pace of writing or a hurrying scribe.³¹ This reason is perhaps related to what J. J. Janssen considered to be incidental variations in the signs of a text (in the case analysed by this scholar, a hieratic text), arising from the scribe paying inadequate attention throughout the writing process.³² Janssen also pointed out that the writing style tended to deteriorate as a text unfolds, due to tiredness of the scribe, to an urge to finish, or to unknown reasons.³³ This principle is difficult to apply in the burial chambers since we don't know if the spells were written from beginning to end in a single copying session, or if they were copied in groups in several working days.
- Thirdly, alleged use of models written in hieratic.³⁴ This circumstance would have given rise to confusion between graphemes with similar forms when they were transcribed into a different script.
- Fourthly, scribal doubts or indecisiveness on which was the correct hieroglyphic form of a sign. As a consequence, the scribe might mechanically turn to the hieratic graphemes with which he was more acquainted through education and use.³⁵

28 Lüscher 2008, 5; 2015, 101; Lapp 2014, pl. 14 (BD 93, col. 8), pl. 24 (BD 62, col. 4); Hussein 2017, 306–307; Lucarelli 2020, 582.

29 It is interesting to notice how the scribe of TT 87 changed the cursive hieroglyphs of an ostrakon (his mastercopy) into hieratic signs when he reached the bottom of some columns on the wall (Lüscher 2013, 56 g in a column that ends with *pw*, the quail chick – Gardiner G43,  – of the ostrakon is transformed into Z7, , on the wall).

30 An example from TT 11 can be found in Díaz-Iglesias Llanos 2019, 160, fig. 9.7.

31 Lüscher 2008, 5.

32 Janssen 2000, 52.

33 Janssen 2000, 52.

34 Munro and Fuchs 2015, 14 (n. 49 for previous literature); Moje 2007, 456, 461.

35 Haring 2006, 9.

- Fifthly, the skills and self-confidence of the scribes in charge of copying the texts, using master copies written in cursive hieroglyphs (*vs* third point above). These personal traits would allow them to decide in which part of the composition they would write more or less schematised variants of the standard cursive forms that were found in their models.³⁶
- Sixthly, the predominance of hieratic signs in the writing of certain words, for example, in the spelling of the titles and name of the owner of a textual artefact.³⁷

These six reasons are by no means exhaustive, and there may be other, unknown factors.³⁸ Such unexplained causes tie in well with what Eyre labelled as free variations of signs that appear in a hieratic text without relation to the context or position (in a line or in relation to other signs).³⁹

Although the third explanation has often been put forward in the past, recent analyses convincingly suggest that, at least in the case of subterranean burial chambers, it is unlikely that scribes would turn hieratic drafts into cursive hieroglyphic inscriptions in front of the wall, especially in narrow and poorly illuminated spaces.⁴⁰ The current tendency is to consider that the model used in the tomb decoration would have been similar to the end product, in terms of writing system.⁴¹ As the case of Nakhtmin aptly demonstrates, and was also suggested by some scholars on the grounds of textual-transmission analyses of other earlier sources,⁴² the use of master copies written in cursive hieroglyphs does not preclude the occasional presence of hieratic signs in these same *Vorlage*.⁴³ The latter could be faithfully copied or transformed into their cursive hieroglyphic counterparts when the texts were remediated. The example of Nakhtmin is illuminating in this sense. If one examines it closely, four main types of variations between the model (i. e. ostraca) and the copy (i. e. walls of the burial chamber of TT 87) can be detected: changes in the arrangement of

36 Lucarelli 2020, 588.

37 Dorman 2019, 32, commenting on the case of the *rishi* coffin of Satdjehuty-satibu (Munich ÄS 7163 + 7270).

38 Lüscher 2015, 101.

39 Eyre 1979, 86.

40 Kahl 1996, 70; Haring 2015, 72, 74–79.

41 Díaz Iglesias Llanos 2018, 38 (citing previous literature).

42 Allen 1976, 26–27 (cf. Kahl 1996, 69–72).

43 Lüscher 2013. A close parallel to TT 87 are the ostraca found in the courtyard of TTT 29 (tomb of Amenemope), bearing parts of the *Duties of the Vizier*, a composition that was used in the decoration of the tomb's walls (Tallet 2005). The ostraca were written in columns of cursive or semi-cursive hieroglyphs, but some signs' forms are closer to hieratic than to the former script (Haring 2015, 70–71).



Fig. 5: Passage of BD 64 written on the fifth register of the ceiling in the burial chamber of TT 11, showing a corrupted version that originated from the substitution of signs with similar shape in hieratic (A1 for X1) (© Djehuty Project)

signs; substitution of equivalent graphemes (for example, Gardiner O34 — and S29 𓂀); transformation of script (from hieratic to cursive hieroglyphs or, less frequently, *vice versa*); and mechanical errors (mainly confusion or omission of signs).⁴⁴ The third is one of the more common adaptations introduced by the scribe as he⁴⁵ remediated the texts onto the three-dimensional surfaces. It is remarkable that there is a single mistake in the seventy-four instances of script transformation (specifically of the conversion of hieratograms into cursive hieroglyphs),⁴⁶ a fact that proves the competence and ability of the copyist.

Isolated hieratic signs in a master copy written in cursive hieroglyphs could also give rise to misinterpretations. In fact, some mistakes attested in the burial chamber of TT 11 may be due to the confusion of a scribe who turned hieratic signs from his model into the wrong hieroglyphs on the surfaces of the chamber.⁴⁷ In a passage of spell BD 64, while all parallels have the sentence *nn jw mwt=j r=j* ‘no evil of my mother shall be against me’, in TT 11 the meaningless *nn jw mwt trt* was recorded (fig. 5), perhaps due to the similar shape of the signs Gardiner A1 (first singular suffix pronoun, 𓂀) and X1 (*t, 𓂀*) in hieratic (= Möller nos. 33B and 575 respectively).

44 A systematic comparison between the ostraca and the walls of the burial chamber is currently undertaken by the author and Daniel Méndez Rodríguez in the framework of the project mentioned in n. 23 and will be the subject of a future article.

45 *In situ* analyses of scribal hands in the burial chamber of TT 87, using an array of criteria pertaining to the spheres of the signs, layout, and writing practices, has led me to conclude that a single copyist was responsible for the decoration.

46 The opposite phenomenon, the conversion of the model’s cursive hieroglyphs into hieratic signs on the walls, is only attested three times (one of which is described in n. 29).

47 Kahl 1996, 11, n. 1; 69. Many examples of mistakes originating from the similar shape of signs in hieratic and cursive hieroglyphs are gathered in Lüscher 2013.


Suggested methodology: Which? How many? Where? By whom?


In the evaluation of the meaning and importance of the hieratic signs included in a text written in cursive hieroglyphs, I suggest one should take into account the following aspects before proceeding to offer explanatory hypotheses for their intrusion: 1. the typology or classification of the signs; 2. their function; 3. their frequency; 4. their location, in terms of general spatial distribution (i. e. on the ceiling, towards corners, on the left part of a wall, etc.), specific position or height within a column (in the upper, middle, or lower section of a text column), and word context; and (if possible) 5. their copyist, in other words, who wrote them.

There follows a description of these aspects applied to the sources mentioned in section 2. In the case of the burial chamber of TT 11, the results of the analysis are to some extent hindered by the state of preservation of the surfaces. The lower part of the columns of the first register on the west and north walls (the only walls whose decoration is preserved) is severely damaged by salt, so that one can no longer verify if hieratic signs were used in these sections. The same applies to the second horizontal register on these same walls. Its columns start at a height of 40–50 cm above floor level and end only 10–15 cm higher than that level, so that the scribes must have written them while sitting or squatting. If this ergonomic factor had any bearing on the presence of hieratograms is difficult to say, in light of the current state of the lower surfaces.

To address the ‘which?’ query, it should be noted that in terms of typology most hieratograms found in TT 11 belong to certain groups or classes (fig. 6). There is an overwhelming preponderance of birds, especially of the more complex types, which either represent specific functions and values, or are depictions of the general concept [BIRD] or [EVIL]. Most types of birds, except for the more common quail chick (*w*), vulture (*z*), and owl (*m*), and some rare types of ducks and geese, are usually rendered in hieratic or in abbreviated forms that dispense with depicting the breast and belly (cf. birds of section G in fig. 6, with those of fig. 2).

The class of birds is followed, in number of attestations, by that of trees and plants, and then by those signs related to the sky, earth and water, and to man and his occupations. To put this figure in context, hieratic signs from the birds’ and plants’ categories also predominate in texts written in cursive hieroglyphs on the ostraca of Nakhtmin⁴⁸ and in the burial chamber of Amenemhat (TT 82).⁴⁹ In

48 In stark contrast to the case of TT 11, the most often attested hieratic bird in these ostraca is the vulture (*z*, Gardiner G1, , Möller no. 192). In the cursive hieroglyphic texts written on these mobile carriers, this sign is rendered in hieratic in three quarters of its attestations.

49 In contrast to TT 11, some common birds, such as the quail chick (*w*, Gardiner G43, , Möller no. 200), are rendered in both cursive hieroglyphic and hieratic versions.

Hieratic signs in a cursive hieroglyphic text




















Gardiner's sections	Gardiner/Möller	Nr. of attestations
Sect. G. Birds	 (G24/Nr. 201)	2
	 (G25/Nr. 204)	3
	 (G28/Nr. 205)	8
	 (G29/Nr. 209)	10
	 (G29+R7/Nr. 209)	1
	 (G30/Nr. 212)	12
	 (G35/Nr. 215)	1
	 (G37/Nr. 197)	43
	 (G38/Nr. 217 bis)	4
	 (G39/Nr. 216)	26
Sect. M. Trees and Plants	 (M2/Nr. 268)	18
	 (M3/Nr. 269)	29
	 (M13/Nr. 280)	5
	 (M20/Nr. 279)	1
	 (N1/Nr. 300)	6
Sect. N Sky, earth, water	 (N5/Nr. 303)	10
	 (N23/Nr. 324)	2
	 (N25/Nr. 322)	11

Fig. 6: Hieratograms most frequently attested in TT II, ordered by Gardiner's classes. For sake of convenience, the second column shows a single example of the signs' shape

TT II, there are hardly any ligatures or connected forms, which might be due to the columnar format adopted. The exception is the group *wn + n*, a New Kingdom innovation,⁵⁰ which is written in a ligature only on the ceiling. Whether this was because of the difficulties – in ergonomic terms – of decorating a horizontal but inverted surface, or to the work of a different scribe than those in charge of the walls, is an issue that requires further research.

Inside the group of man and his occupations (Gardiner's class A), a fairly frequent and simple sign (A2, ) is often rendered in hieratic (Möller no. 35) in

⁵⁰ Gasse 2018, 120, fig. 3b.

TT II (fig. 7, above).⁵¹ With 76 witnesses, this is by far the most commonly attested hieratogram in the burial chamber of Djehuty, which may be down to the fact that this sign enters in the orthography of frequently written words such as *Jbty/Jbw*, the name of Djehuty's father, and the interjection *j*, ubiquitous in the 42 negative confessions of BD 125B.⁵² In contrast, less common and more complex human figures were more carefully traced and display intricate details (fig. 7, below). In fact, there is no rule of thumb regarding the use of hieratic as a simplified alternative to a more elaborate cursive hieroglyphic sign. It seems that the scribes in charge of the decoration of this space deployed their graphic skills, which depended on their education and personal experience in copying and reading texts, when writing very complex signs, even in places such as the ceiling that were difficult to access (see fifth reason adduced in section 3.1).

Besides the presence of hieratic signs in the BD formulae of TT II, one may speak of a certain material or palaeographical hieratic influence on cursive hieroglyphs.⁵³ I suggest that this influence is visible in three aspects: the ductus; the closeness displayed by signs with similar forms that correspond to dissimilar hieroglyphic signs; and the addition of diacritic strokes (fig. 8). A note of caution is important following Haring, who noted that some of the features to be discussed in the next paragraph do not necessarily indicate a direct derivation from hieratic, since many were current in contemporary and earlier cursive hieroglyphs.⁵⁴

Firstly, as regards text orientation, hieratic is a right-to-left script only, although as Allen pointed out, individual signs were normally written from left to right, with the exception of right-to-left diagonals.⁵⁵ In the burial chamber of Djehuty, the order in which the strokes were executed when tracing the cursive hieroglyphs – from left to right – is particularly clear in the plural mark. Even when this sign is written with dots, instead of with strokes, the weight of the ink indicates the same direction of writing, which was counter to the reading direction of the signs within a column. Whether the similarity in execution derives from the influence of hieratic on cursive hieroglyphs, or to some practical issues related to the natural flow of the rush pens over the writing surface, is more difficult to say and dependent on trials with 'exper-

51 The texts copied in TT 87 hark back to past models, and the orthography stands out for its archaising traits, with the omission of divine and human figures (Lüscher 2013, 10), so that there are no hieratograms belonging to Gardiner's class A in this case.


52 Cf. the case of TT 82, where BD 125B is also attested but the classifier of the interjection *j* is written in cursive hieroglyphs.

53 The influence of hieratic on (monumental and cursive) hieroglyphs has been dealt with by Gutbub 1982; Meeks 2004, xiv–xv; Haring 2006, 9; Meeks 2007, 6–10; Polis 2020, 554–555.

54 Haring 2006, 8–9; 2010, 33–34; 2015, 74–75.

55 Allen 2002, 76.

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Gardiner's sections	Gardiner/Möller	Nr. of attestations
Sect. A. Man and his occupations	 (A1/Nr. 33) (A2/Nr. 35)	 1 76



C II 51






W I 20



W I 23

Fig. 7: Above: hieratograms from Gardiner's A class in TT II. Below: examples of elaborate cursive hieroglyphic signs depicting human beings in TT II with their location

imental epigraphy'. Secondly, as attested in hieratic texts, the absence of inner details in certain signs of TT II would render them indistinguishable where it not for the context of their use. Thus, the shape of the sun disc (N5, ☉) and that of the *zp*-sign (O50, ☉) looks alike, and it is by virtue of the word in which they appear that one can tell them apart. Thirdly, the addition of diacritic marks, which is a hallmark of hieratic, is conspicuous in some graphemes of TT II, such as the ox ear (F2I, ) , the tethering rope (V14, )⁵⁶ and the fire drill (U28, ) . The latter is the only sign for which I have found very few parallels among contemporary BD productions, appearing – to my knowledge – only in witnesses written in hieratic.⁵⁷

To complete the 'which?' query, I should point out that the signs written in hieratic within the BD formulae that fill the surfaces of Djehuty's burial chamber perform predominantly the functions of phonograms and classifiers, and, to a lesser extent, of logograms.

The frequency and location of hieratograms in a cursive hieroglyphic text set the 'how many?' and 'where?' queries in motion, two issues that should be combined in the analysis.⁵⁸ In TT II, the overall distribution of hieratograms does not always sug-

⁵⁶ For the sign Gardiner F2I, see Servajean 2011, 30 § 54; Haring 2006, 9, 56 § 71. For V14: Servajean 2011, 109 § 214; Haring 2006, 9, 124 § 247.

⁵⁷ For example, in papyrus Brussels MRAH SN: <http://totenbuch.awk.nrw.de/objekt/tm134264> [1 August 2020].

⁵⁸ As Lucarelli points out (Lucarelli 2019, 139), textual analyses should be always complemented by an analysis of the text in close connection to its media of distribution. For this new trend of 'Material Philology' in Egyptology, see works quoted in Díaz-Iglesias Llanos 2019, 153, n. 39. The occurrence of variants in classifiers, their quantification and clustering within the three-dimensional space of a burial chamber are taken by Roberson 2019 as important indicators of the use of lost master documents.











Gardiner	Möller	Visual Glyph	TT 11
Closeness of forms in signs that correspond to dissimilar hieroglyphs			
N5	Nr. 303		 C 138
O50	/		 C 138
Addition of diacritic strokes			
F21	Nr. 158		 C V 29
U28	Nr. 391		 C 125
V14	Nr. 528		 N 14

Fig. 8: Examples of the different forms in which hieratic may have had an influence on the cursive hieroglyphs of TT 11

gest meaningful patterns, so that one should refrain from making generalisations. For example, the availability of space is a practical need that has been invoked as an overarching explanation for the introduction of the more abbreviated signs (see section 3.1.). However, two examples of TT 11 indicate that space constraints were a concern only in a limited number of cases. On the one hand, when some elements of a sentence (and not only a single sign) had been overlooked and the scribe needed to squeeze them in at a later stage, hieratic forms were useful.⁵⁹ But on the other hand, on the ceiling, where the bottoms of columns are better preserved than on the walls, one would expect to find such signs towards the lower parts of columns, as texts crammed in due to lack of space. However, in these circumstances, scribes turned to hieratic in very few instances.⁶⁰

⁵⁹ See example quoted in n. 30.

⁶⁰ The same is true of TT 82 (Amenemhat), where reluctance to divide linguistic units between columns caused the cramming of many signs at the bottom of columns, and little use was made of hieratograms in these locations.



If one maps the location of hieratograms on the written surfaces of the TT II burial chamber,⁶¹ the concentration of signs in corners and on the ceiling is conspicuous. Ease of execution should be considered as a major factor in the frequency and distribution of hieratic signs on a textualised artefact written in cursive hieroglyphs, given that their number might rise where the writing surface obliged copyists to adopt uncomfortable positions (as in TT II). While the case of corners will be analysed below, the high number of hieratic forms in the BD formulae copied on the ceiling could be explained both by ergonomic factors and by the larger surface covered in texts. Thus, if the writing medium changed abruptly, from a vertical wall to the horizontal but upside-down surface of the ceiling, material constraints played a greater role, and these had an effect on both the texts in their general outlook and on individual signs. These constraints resulted in a simplification of the graphemes, with scribes resorting more often to hieratic, although some of the most carefully drawn signs of the chamber can be also found in this section. The mentioned constraints are also reflected in a less neat distribution of the signs within a column: they are often off-center, display a larger variety in sizes, the distance among them is more uneven, and they can overlap.

In TT II, hieratograms appear most often at random points in the composition and at varying heights in the columns. Against preconceived ideas, these signs are neither predominant at the end of a spell, where one may surmise that a scribe was becoming hasty in his task, nor do they commonly appear at the lower part of columns (see above). To explain this phenomenon of random location, I suggest that copyists turned mechanically and unconsciously to the hieratic forms that they used more frequently and had learnt first, before moving into the hieroglyphic system at an advanced stage of their careers.⁶² It is no wonder that they reverted, sporadically and mechanically, and without any recognisable pattern at a spatial level, to hieratic signs as they copied a text written in cursive hieroglyphs from a ‘transportable text-carrier’ onto the fixed walls and ceiling of Djehuty’s final resting place.


Analyses can be further refined if different scribal hands can be identified in a textual artefact, adding the ‘by whom?’ to the list of queries to be pursued in the research. Two scribes can be distinguished on the west wall of the burial chamber of TT II by looking into a variety of aspects related to three broad analytical categories: layout, signs, and scribal practices. The pattern of use of hieratic signs – an aspect of the scribal practices’ category – of these two individuals can therefore be compared across the same number of text columns. For sake of clarity they will be here called ‘Scribe A’ and ‘Scribe B’ (fig. 9). Scribe A resorted to hieratic signs in a limited

61 For this mapping strategy, see Díaz-Iglesias Llanos 2019, 158–159.

62 For the school curriculum, the types of script learnt by scribes, and how the transition between hieratic and cursive hieroglyphs might have been bridged, see Golet 2010, 122–126.

number of cases, predominantly belonging to the birds' class. They further appear at random positions in spells and at different heights in the columns. Scribe B used hieratic in a wider range of signs that are not predominantly encompassed by the birds' group, but in most cases, he also used a cursive hieroglyphic version of these same signs. Thus, he could write a given word, for example *Rwty* or *ḥk:w*, once using hieratic for the signs Möller no. 125 and 108, and then turn to cursive hieroglyphs (Gardiner E23, , and D28, ) for no apparent reason (fig. 9, lower section of the table). The same phenomenon is attested elsewhere in the burial chamber of TT II, as will be discussed below, and indeed the use of a cursive hieroglyph and the same sign in hieratic is often attested within the same papyrus.⁶³

Scribe B decorated the right-hand part of the west wall and used three times more hieratic signs than his colleague in charge of the left-hand part. As mentioned, the analysis of the frequency of use of hieratic signs must be accompanied by an examination of their location, since 'mapping' this feature on the wall indicates that 50% of these signs are concentrated in the final three columns before the corner. This ratio might indicate handedness, because a right-handed scribe would have felt less comfortable in the corner between the west and north walls than a left-handed one. In view of material constraints, he opted for reducing the size of many graphemes and simplifying their form to their hieratic version.

Because two scribes have been identified on the west wall of the burial chamber of TT II, it is important to notice whether a hieratogram alternates in the text with a cursive hieroglyphic version of the same sign. It is a well-known phenomenon of Egyptian handwriting that in a brief text passage, even in the same words, scribes could use two forms of the same sign that differ in their degree of iconicity, i. e. a full or regular form and an abbreviated or alternate one (fig. 10).⁶⁴ This could happen with elaborate signs, but also with the most common graphemes such as the horned-viper (*f*, Gardiner I9, , Möller no. 263, fig. 10, example B). Why a scribe opted for a full or an abbreviated form of a sign is difficult to say. In the case of TT II, the choice does not seem to depend on a functional reason (for example, the lack of space at the bottom of columns, as discussed above). The selection is also not dependent on graphic arrangement or on how signs were grouped in quadrats, rejecting the idea that in the grouping of two signs that involve one sign of the birds' class and a vertical one, hieratic versions of birds are selected to better fit in the qua-

63 Milde 1991, 18; Lüscher 2008, 5, 2015, 101; Lucarelli 2020, 582. The use of forms closer to hieratic and to hieroglyphic in close vicinity is a phenomenon also attested in the Amduat.

64 I adopt the terminology for describing signs used by Allen 2002, 77–78. This phenomenon of synchronic variation of signs has been studied by Megally 1971 in the case of hieratic texts. This scholar dubs the different forms as *completes et développées* (those closer to hieroglyphs) and *abrégeés et schématisées* (Megally 1971, xxiv, 14–15).

dratic unit.⁶⁵ Moreover, the use of hieratograms cannot be related to the spelling of certain words (see sixth reason given in section 3.1),⁶⁶ and nor does the position of a word bearing the hieratic sign within the text seem to be relevant, so that the idea that developed forms predominate at the beginning or in the title of a spell⁶⁷ should be discarded.

There is one conspicuous exception to the tendency of random alternation between hieratic and cursive hieroglyphic signs in TT II. Scribe B used a regular and a more abbreviated form of the sign A1 in a seemingly conscious way (fig. 11); he wrote it one way when the sign is used as a first person suffix pronoun, and another when used as a classifier, accompanying nouns and personal names (such as that of Djehuty's father).⁶⁸ By way of comparison, Scribe A always wrote A1 the same way in each linguistic context. The hierarchy in the iconicity of the A1 grapheme used by Scribe B might have linguistic roots. Thus, he reserved the highest pictorial representation for the semographic use of the sign, but chose the more abstract form to convey grammatical and phonographic information.⁶⁹ Curiously, this hierarchy is the opposite of the one found in the Middle Kingdom hieratic papyri of Hekanakht. In his study of these manuscripts, Allen observed that for the same A1 sign – and for other graphemes as well – abbreviated forms were preferred to regular forms when they functioned as classifiers.⁷⁰

Ali noted a similar phenomenon to the one described for Scribe B in TT II in the 19th dynasty cursive hieroglyphic papyrus of Ani (London British Museum EA 10470). According to this scholar, a copyist of the well-known BD papyrus of Ani tended to use what he called 'monumental' sign forms, close in shape to

65 The ostraca of Nakhtmin show examples of the pairing of a vertical grapheme and the hieratic ꜥ (G1) in a quadrat (Lüscher 2013, pl. 2, col. 9; pl. 4, cols. 5 and 6, etc.). In two cases, the distribution of the signs was altered on the walls, as the hieratic ꜥ of the ostrakon was turned twice into its cursive hieroglyphic counterpart and filled all the space of the quadrat, together with a little stroke resp. a *t*-sign in front of the legs (Lüscher 2013, 89 l, pl. 16, col. 3, twice).

66 See n. 37.

67 This is an adaptation of Janssen's (Janssen 1987) analysis of the different hieratic forms of ꜥ. This scholar noticed that carefully written forms mostly occurred in the headings of the texts that he examined. See also bibliography cited in n. 33.

68 This phenomenon should be distinguished from the trend outlined by Meeks (Meeks 2007, 10–11, fig. 5d) to use different classifiers (the usual seated man, and the seated man with his arms crossed over the chest and his back covered with a cloth) to refer to a living individual and a dead one on a stela from the end of the Ptolemaic Period and probably also in Rameside monuments.

69 The awareness that Egyptians had of their language as an abstract entity, forming a system, has been dealt with by Uljas 2013.

70 Allen 2002, 77–78. Elaborate forms came into play when the same signs were used as phonograms.




Scribes	Scribe A	Scribe B
Hieratic Signs	9 (mostly birds)	33 (not predominantly birds) 50% in the last three columns of the wall
Examples of hieratic signs		
Spelling of words alternating hieratic and cursive hieroglyphic signs		 <p><i>Rwty</i></p> <p><i>hksw</i></p>

Fig. 9: Comparison between Scribe A and Scribe B in the use of hieratic signs in TT 11 (© Djehuty Project)

hieroglyphs, when writing the classifier that accompanied the name of the owner.⁷¹ However, several scribes were involved in the manufacture of this manuscript, which was the result of a ‘stock-like’ production system,⁷² and the one responsible for adding Ani’s name in the void spaces within the texts was not the same as the one (or ones) who copied the BD formulae. The differences highlighted by Ali may well reflect more ‘principal’ variations between two scribal hands⁷³ than a conscious selection in the degree of a sign’s formality made by a single copyist. Besides, the monumentalisation of the owner’s name is a phenomenon attested in other types of textual sources.

71 Ali 2001, 20.

72 Leach and Parkinson 2010.

73 For the opposition between ‘principal’ and ‘incidental’ variations, see Eyre 1979.

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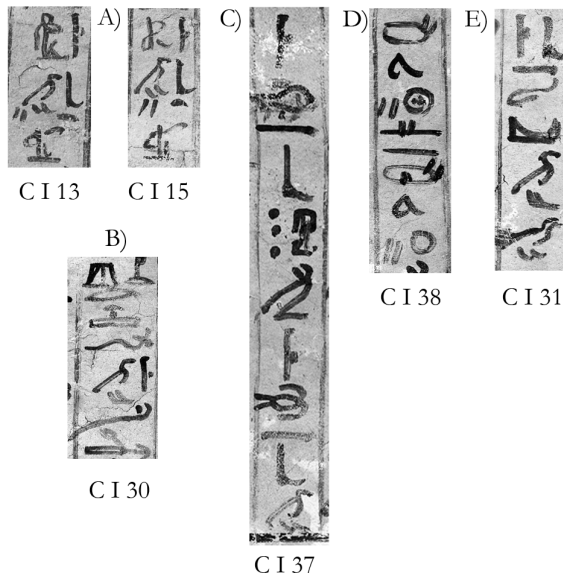


Fig. 10: Alternating hieratic and cursive hieroglyphic signs in the orthography of the same words in TT II, involving the signs A1/Möller no. 33 (in example A), I9/Möller no. 263 (example B), K1/Möller no. 253 (example C), O50/Möller no. 403 (example D), G37/Möller no. 197 (example E) © Djehuty Project

To conclude, when studying a text written in cursive hieroglyphs, I suggest considering the presence of hieratic signs as a category in the analysis of scribal practices, at the same level as, for example, the introduction of corrections, different orthographic trends, or dipping patterns. I endorse the opinion of Haring, who stated that meticulous palaeographic analysis should not be considered a mere auxiliary tool to establish the date and provenance of an inscribed object or monument, but is instead a powerful means of gaining insight into how those who made hieroglyphic texts were organised.⁷⁴ In this sense, the type, function, frequency, location, and authorship of hieratograms in a text written in a more formal script could be explained by material factors, cultural causes, individual choices, and, probably, by unconscious and mechanical reasons. I would like to stress that the relationships between textual artefacts and human beings are complex and reciprocal. Scribes typically opted for certain media when committing texts to writing, and, at the same time, these material choices influenced scribal decisions and practices in an active manner.

Bearing in mind the material constraints imposed by the physical medium and the circumstances in which the work was executed – subterranean, small, dimly lit, scarcely ventilated spaces – it is no wonder that we find a concentration of hieratic

⁷⁴ Haring 2010, 22, 31–33.

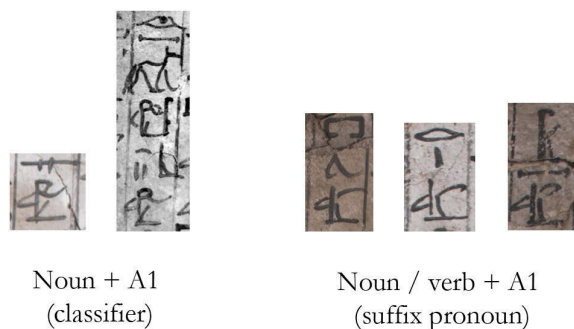


Fig. 11: Use of two forms of the sign A1 by Scribe B in TT 11, according to the function exerted by the sign: as a classifier (left), as a suffix pronoun (right) (© Djehuty Project)

signs in corners and on the ceiling in the burial chamber of Djehuty, but cultural and individual factors played no small role in the intrusion of hieratic signs. On the one hand, it should be remembered that hieratic was the first script taught at scribal schools, and the common writing system for everyday and administrative documents. With this cultural background in mind, one can explain that many hieratic signs pop up randomly and in a practically spontaneous manner when a text containing traits that were different to current administrative and even literary practices – cursive hieroglyphs, columns, retrograde orientation – was being copied. On the other hand, certain scribes tended to use hieratic signs more often than others, and for certain types of sign (for example, those belonging to the birds' group), so that one can consider them as part of the individual characteristic of a copyist.

Finally, I suggest that new insights could be gained by broadening the scope of research, and taking analyses from the spaces and writing surfaces dealt with in this paper to other types of media. It will thus be interesting to compare hieratic signs included in funerary texts written in cursive hieroglyphs in burial chambers of the early 18th dynasty, with those intruding in the same type of composition in contemporary papyri. I am referring to papyri copied in cursive hieroglyphs and, especially, to the few examples written in hieratic in columns: Bruxelles MRAH SN (dated to the reign of Thutmose III),⁷⁵ Los Angeles 83.A1.46.3 (of the 18th dynasty),⁷⁶ and Paris Louvre E. 11085 (dated to the early 18th dynasty, prior to the joint reign of Hatshepsut and Thutmose III).⁷⁷ The same applies to contemporary or slightly

75 Capart 1934; Totenbuchprojekt Bonn, TM 134264, <totenbuch.awk.nrw.de/objekt/tm134264> [19 April 2020].

76 Totenbuchprojekt Bonn, TM 134689, <totenbuch.awk.nrw.de/objekt/tm134689> [19 April 2020].

77 Munro 1995. Vertical columns of hieratic, separated from each other by dividing lines, are written after a section of several horizontal hieratic lines or pages.

earlier shrouds covered with columns of BD spells, of which some were written in hieratic (New York MMA 22.3.296, dated to the beginning of the 18th dynasty)⁷⁸ or where one finds many signs that come closer to hieratic than to cursive hieroglyphs (Turin 63005 + Uppsala VM MB 107, dated to the end of the 17th dynasty or beginning of the 18th dynasty;⁷⁹ Cairo JE 96804, of the early 18th dynasty).⁸⁰ There is a reason for preferring papyri and shrouds with texts arranged in columns when comparing media. When the vertical format is adopted and hieratic is written in columns instead of in horizontal lines, there is a tendency to restrict the ligatures, and there are different conventions in the selection of signs and their placement in relation to one another.⁸¹ These circumstances more readily permit the comparison between different vehicles for text transmission that have hieratic signs interspersed within cursive hieroglyphic texts.

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78 Totenbuchprojekt Bonn, TM 133682, <totenbuch.awk.nrw.de/object/tm133682> [19 April 2020].

79 Ronsecco 1996, 203, pl. 90–94.

80 Munro 1994: 47–48, photo-pl. 20–21.

81 Goelet 2013, 117.

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